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**Arnold Schwarzenegger**  
*Governor*

**Mike Chrisman**  
*Secretary for Resources*

**Ruth Coleman**  
*Director of Parks and Recreation*

State of California  
The Resources Agency  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

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## General Plan Inquiries

The Tomales Bay State Park General Plan was prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation Northern Service Center and North Bay District staff. For general information regarding this document, or to request additional copies, please contact:

California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Northern Service Center  
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500  
Sacramento, California 95814

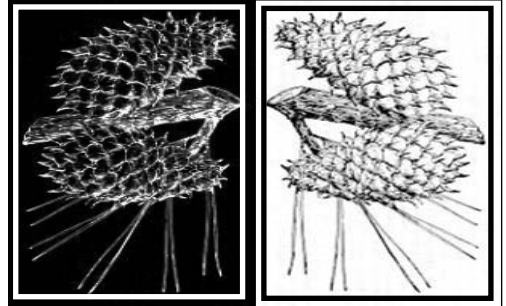
Attention: Tomales Bay State Park General Plan Team

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# *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*



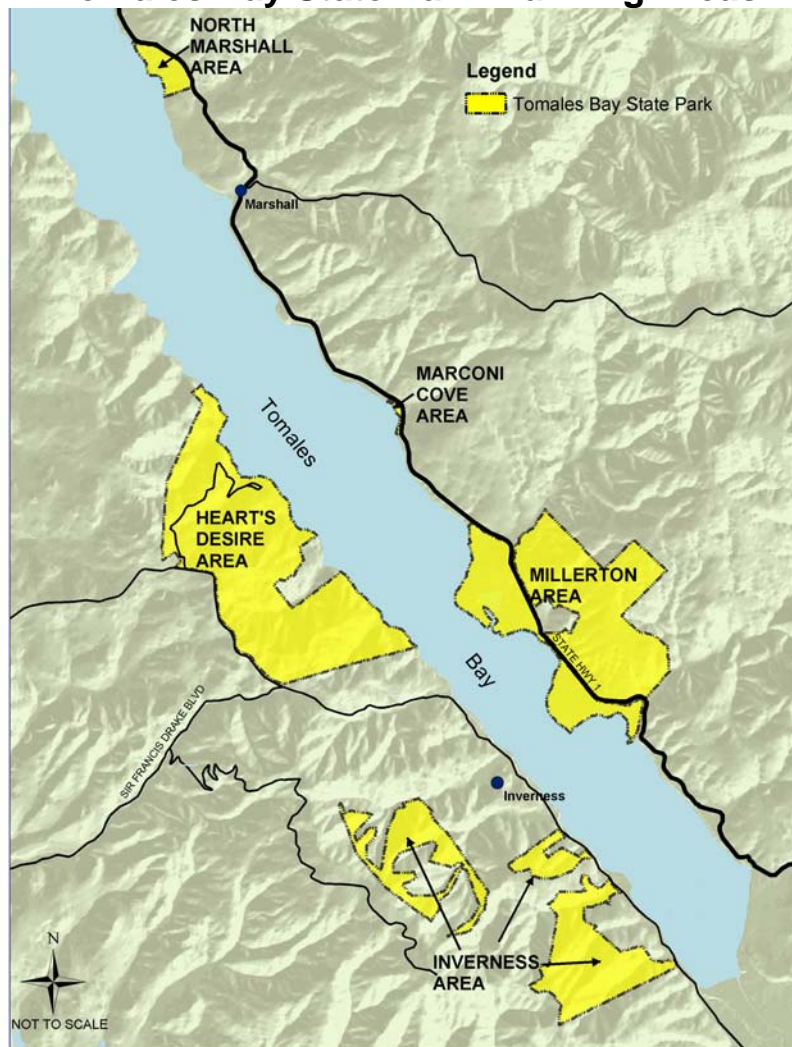


## LOCATION AND PARK AREAS

Tomales Bay State Park is located 40 miles north of San Francisco in Marin County, adjacent to Point Reyes National Seashore and near the communities of Inverness, Point Reyes Station, and Marshall. The park is comprised of seven separate land parcels located on the west and east shores of Tomales Bay. This plan groups these parcels into five distinct planning areas. The west shore areas include the Heart's Desire Area and the Inverness Area, and the east shore areas include the Millerton Area, the Marconi Cove Area, and the North Marshall Area.

The 2,000-acre park features four gently sloping, surf-free beaches on the west side of the bay, steep forested slopes on the Inverness Ridge, and bayshore and upland properties along Highway 1. To date, park recreational facilities and opportunities are limited to the Heart's Desire and Millerton Areas.

### Tomales Bay State Park Planning Areas



## PURPOSE OF PARK ACQUISITION

In the 1940s real estate developers began to purchase bayfront land in Marin County, prompting local residents and conservation groups to save this area as a park and preserving public access to its beaches. On November 8, 1952, Tomales Bay State Park was formally dedicated and opened to the public. The park originally consisted of the beaches and forests of the Heart's Desire Area.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public input for this general plan was gathered and stakeholders were informed and involved in a number of ways, including a planning website, a public scoping meeting, a park visitor survey, and a newsletter. Public involvement efforts included a public meeting to review the plan proposals contained in the Preliminary General Plan / Draft EIR during the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process and a concluding State Parks Commission Hearing. Coordination meetings were held with the Tomales Bay Watershed Council, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Marin County concerning their on-going planning efforts.

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## PRINCIPAL PLANNING ISSUES AND KEY SOLUTION CONCEPTS

The following summaries highlight the important regional and parkwide issues that are addressed in the plan. Key plan concepts for resolving these issues follow each park issue summary.

### **Issue: Regional Planning, Interagency Coordination, and Community Relations**

Regional Issues such as water quality, recreation and education planning, and resource and aesthetic preservation cannot be solved simply at the park level. Accordingly, this general plan evaluates the issues and opportunities of Tomales Bay State Park in its regional and community perspective.

#### **KEY CONCEPTS:**

- Enhance interagency coordination concerning the regional acquisition and management of ecological, biological, recreational, cultural, aesthetic, and educational resources to create a more efficient, effective, cooperative, and holistic resource and recreation vision

- Maintain and enhance positive relations and communications between State Parks and neighboring communities and landowners towards meeting common goals, including security, safety, aesthetic and resource protection, and recreational opportunity

### **Issue: Park Connectivity**

Tomales Bay State Park is currently comprised of seven disconnected land parcels. An important goal of the plan is to coordinate the planned uses of these parcels so they can, as much as possible, function as a whole despite their physical separation. KEY CONCEPTS:

- Support the goals of the California Coastal Trail Plan by encouraging new north-south trails in the park and connections between park trails and surrounding public trail systems and recreation areas
- Improve short-term “rest-stop” recreational, orientation, and interpretive opportunities for Highway 1 travelers

### **Issue: Water Quality, Erosion, and Estuaries**

The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has designated Tomales Bay as an impaired watershed. This plan makes recommendations to improve the quality of the park’s stream, estuary, and adjacent bay waters and to reduce erosion and heal erosion scars.

KEY CONCEPT:

- Promote healthy watershed processes and high quality waters in the park and in the Tomales Bay Watershed in cooperation with other agencies and the local community

### **Issue: Sensitive Species, Biocorridors, and Habitats**

The park is currently a refuge for a number of sensitive plant and animal species of terrestrial, estuarine, intertidal, and marine environments. The plan makes recommendations to enhance these habitats and biocorridors, restore sensitive plant and animal populations, and protect these and other less sensitive species.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Protect and, where appropriate, restore aquatic and terrestrial sensitive plant and animal habitats and species within the park
- Preserve, rehabilitate and, as appropriate, establish new habitat linkages between the park and surrounding protected lands
- Eradicate or control invasive exotic plant species in the park

### **Issue: Vegetation and Fire Management**

The plan makes vegetation and fire management recommendations to help restore native plant communities and natural vegetation processes, improve recreational and aesthetic values, and reduce wildfire danger.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Manage for the enhancement and perpetuation of native plant species diversity and the biological integrity of native plant communities

- Restore the role of fire in the natural ecological processes of the park

### **Issue: Recent Acquisitions, Recreational Demand, and Visitor Facilities**

One of the major issues for this general plan is how to accommodate and respond to an expected rise in recreational demand in West Marin, while, at the same time, providing adequate protection for sensitive natural, cultural and aesthetic resources. The plan addresses the adequacy and possible improvement or addition of recreational facilities such as trails, scenic wayside pullouts, group and individual picnic areas, interpretive exhibits, boat ramps, campgrounds, and restrooms. The plan considers improvements to park entrances, traffic and pedestrian circulation, and parking as well as visitor services and concessions. Recent acquisitions of ranchlands above Millerton Point, a former marina site at Marconi Cove, and coastal property north of Marshall are evaluated in the plan for their recreational and preservation potentials and recommendations are made for future use and management.

#### **KEY CONCEPTS:**

- Focus and anchor east shore recreation at Marconi Cove and west shore recreation at Heart's Desire Area
- Manage the greater part of park areas for their habitat, watershed, and aesthetic values and for low-impact and low-density recreation opportunities such as trail use, nature observation, and picnicking
- Enhance trail connections with Point Reyes National Seashore in the Heart's Desire and Inverness Areas
- Improve recreational opportunities along the Highway 1 corridor where recent acquisitions present new opportunities
- Formalize small-scale camping opportunities in previously developed areas
- Watercraft and sailboard launching opportunities will be provided at Marconi Cove and hiking and mountain biking recreational opportunities will be provided at the proposed trail in the Millerton Uplands
- Use sustainable design in the siting, construction, and maintenance of park facilities

*Improve recreational opportunities along the Highway 1 corridor where recent acquisitions present new opportunities*

### **Issue: Visitor Safety and Natural Hazards**

The plan makes recommendations to improve visitor safety regarding potential hazards such as wildfire, landslides, and earthquakes.

#### **KEY CONCEPTS:**

- Provide for public safety and prevent structural failures due to seismic activity, landslides, flooding, and erosion
- Anticipate wildfires and plan strategies to preserve sensitive park resources, ensure human safety, and protect property



### **Issue: Park Operations**

The plan makes recommendations to improve employee housing, administration, and park maintenance facilities. The current park maintenance facility in the Heart's Desire Area is considerably distant from the park's land parcels on the east side of Tomales Bay.

#### **KEY CONCEPTS:**

- Provide needed and appropriate services and facilities for park security, resource protection, visitor access and services, public health and safety, park administration, maintenance, and staff housing in the most efficient, effective, and environmentally-sensitive way

### **Issue: Aesthetics and Viewshed**

The plan makes recommendations to improve protection and management of the park's aesthetic resources and maintain the area's unique spirit of place.

#### **KEY CONCEPTS:**

- Identify and preserve the distinctive aesthetic qualities that help give Tomales Bay State Park its unique "spirit of place"
- Scale and site new recreational development to harmonize with the landscape

*Scale and site new recreational development to harmonize with the landscape*

### **Issue: Cultural Resources Management**

The plan makes recommendations to improve protection and management of the park's archaeological and historic resources.

#### **KEY CONCEPT:**

- Provide an appropriate level of protection, stabilization, preservation, and interpretation of the park's cultural resources, focusing on areas of archaeological and historical importance

### **Issue: Interpretation and Education**

The plan makes recommendations to expand the park's interpretive and educational programs and facilities to keep pace with expanded recreational opportunities and facilities.

#### **KEY CONCEPT:**

- Increase visitor understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the natural, cultural, aesthetic and recreational resources of the park

## **PLAN PROPOSALS**

The above outlined park issues are addressed in the plan's proposals for park resource and recreational enhancements that form the heart of this general plan. The *Goals and Guidelines* section delineates the plan's proposals for managing the park's natural, cultural and aesthetic resources, for interpreting these resources, for

providing recreational facilities and opportunities, and for operating and maintaining the park. The plan also addresses visitor experience at the park and presents a method for monitoring future visitor experiences and park resource values to ensure that both continue to reflect the vision and goals of the General Plan.

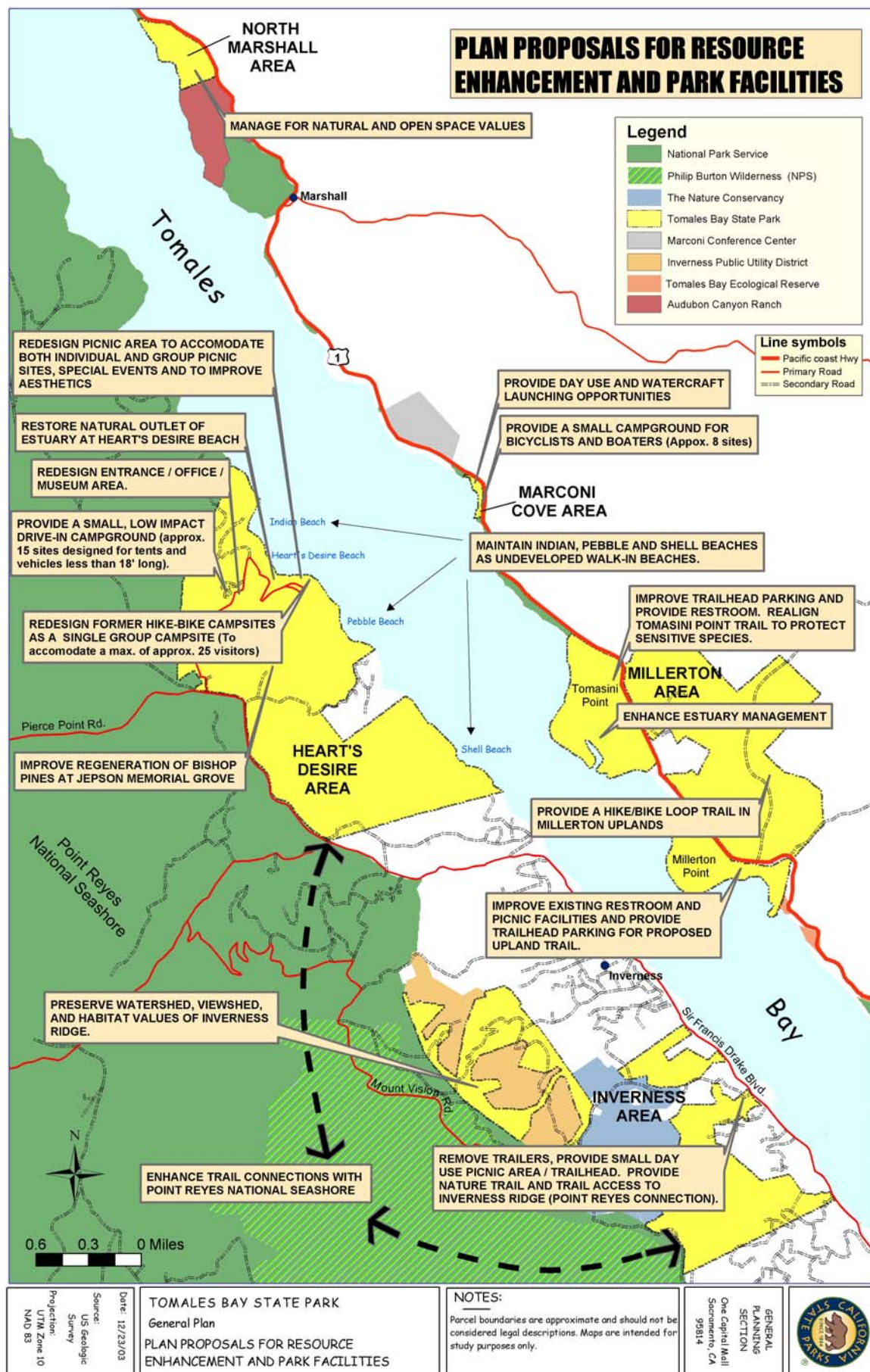
The general plan has two overall approaches that set the tone for the plan's proposals. The first is: *"A LIGHT TOUCH FOR A SENSITIVE AREA."* The plan aims to preserve what works well now in the park and only recommends changes to park management, activities, and recreational and administrative facilities that can harmonize with the area's sensitive values and support valuable visitor experiences of Tomales Bay and its surrounding landscape.

*The general plan has two overall approaches that set the tone for the plan's proposals:*

*" A LIGHT TOUCH FOR A  
SENSITIVE AREA" &  
" ENCOURAGING CONNECTIONS  
AND COMMUNICATION"*

The second approach is: *"ENCOURAGING CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNICATION."* The plan promotes connectivity and communication with surrounding areas, communities, and influences through well-planned facilities, biocorridors, watershed management, community relations, interpretation, volunteer opportunities, regional planning, and fire management.

*The following map and tables summarize the major proposals presented in this plan.*



<b>EXISTING FACILITY CONDITIONS AND PROPOSED FACILITY CHANGES</b>		
<b>AREA</b>	<b>EXISTING CONDITION</b>	<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>
<b>HEART'S DESIRE AREA</b>		
■ Ranger Office	No ADA access, Limited public access, Inefficient site layout	ADA upgrades, Add Miwok exhibits, Improve site layout
■ Maintenance Facility	Adequate to support park locations west of Bay	No Change
■ Outdoor Storage Area "Bone Yard"	Infrequently used operational storage	Convert to 15 site drive-in campground for small vehicles
■ Park Residences	2 residences	No Change
■ Picnic Area	Limited group access, Inefficient layout	Provide group sites, redesign layout
■ Heart's Desire Beach	Drive-up beach access	No Change
■ Indian Beach	Walk-in beach access	No Change
■ Pebble Beach	Walk-in beach access	No Change
■ Shell Beach 1&2	Walk-in beach access	No Change
■ Hike/Bike Campground (CG)	Not in use	Convert to group CG
■ Cartop Watercraft Launch Area	Portion of beach designated for launching	Provide designated unloading area and access route
■ Jepson Trail	1.1 miles long	No Change
■ Johnstone Trail	4 miles long	No Change
■ Indian Beach Trail	.5 miles long, interpretive panels	No Change
■ Trail Connections to Point Reyes N.S.	None	Two connections
<b>INVERNESS AREA</b>		
■ Park Residence	Unmaintained	Possibly Remove
■ 2 Trailers (not in use)	Unmaintained	Remove
■ Picnic Area / Trailhead at N. Dream Farm	None	Provide
■ Trail Connection to Point Reyes N.S.	None	Provide
■ Nature Trail Near N. Dream Farm	None	Provide
<b>MILLERTON AREA</b>		
Park Residence	1 residence	Add 1 residence
Millerton Parking Area	Pit toilet, no running water	Improve restroom
Tomasini Point Parking Area	2 space parallel parking	Add restroom, improve parking
Upland Hike/Bike Trail	None	Provide
<b>MARCONI COVE AREA</b>		
■ Gas Station	Unmaintained	Remove
■ Historic Structure along Hwy 1	Unmaintained	Adaptive reuse
■ Day Use Area (picnicking, boat launching)	None	Provide
■ Walk-In Campsites	None	Approx. 8
<b>NORTH MARSHALL</b>		
■ Facilities	None	Consider providing trail segment to CA Coastal Trail

<b>MAJOR RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS</b>	
<b>AREA</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTIONS</b>
<b>HEART'S DESIRE AREA</b>	
■ Heart's Desire Parking Area	Restore natural outlet of estuary (no reduction in parking).
■ Jepson Grove (Bishop Pines)	Enhance Bishop Pine regeneration
■ Area Beaches	Heart's Desire Beach to remain only drive-up beach Access. Indian, Pebble and Shell Beaches to remain walk-In only beaches.
■ Pierce Point Rd. Security Gate	Continue to control park access from this gate.
<b>INVERNESS AREA</b>	
■ Entire Area, except for Dream Farm Property	Leave undeveloped for watershed, viewshed and habitat values.
■ Entire Area	Consider acquisitions, land exchanges and land use agreements to consolidate or exchange discontinuous parcels.
<b>MILLERTON AREA</b>	
■ Tomasini Point	Preserve, protect and enhance estuary
<b>MARCONI COVE AREA</b>	
■ Southern Portion of Area	Maintain in a natural condition
<b>NORTH MARSHALL AREA</b>	
■ Entire Area	Preserve natural resources and open space character of area
■ Entire Area	Consider land exchanges, memorandums of understanding, and other agreements with surrounding agencies, which would improve management and protection of the area.